[30th January 1929

Public Works

Construction of a bridge over the Rushikulya river.

* 1197 *Q.*—Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo: Will the hon. the Minister for Development be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether there is any proposal for constructing a bridge on the river Rushikulya at Ganjam in the Ganjam district;

(*b*) the estimated expenditure on the said bridge as also the estimated expenditure on iron beams and all other iron articles required for the same;

(*c*) whether the Government have called for tenders from contractors for the said bridge;

(*d*) if so, how and in what papers such notices were published;

(*e*) whether the bridge has been given on contract; and

(*f*) if so, to whom, when and why?

A.—(*a*) Yes.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) Does not arise.

(*b*), (*e*) & (*f*) An approximate estimate amounting to Rs. 8·77 lakhs was approved by Government in January 1928. Subsequently, Messrs. Braithwaite & Co., who reported that they were about to secure a contract for the reconstruction of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway bridge alongside of the proposed road bridge offered to construct the latter at a cost of 7 lakhs within one year using the old girders of the Railway bridge. This proposal was approved. The Chief Engineer has however recently reported after personal inspection that portions of the old steel work have to be replaced, that changes are necessary in the foundations, that the width of the roadway should be increased from 14 to 18 feet and that the plans and estimates will require revision. These matters are now under the consideration of the Chief Engineer and pending their settlement a formal agreement with the firm has not yet been entered into. The Government have no information as to the cost of the iron articles required for the proposed bridge separately.

Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—" In reply to my question, clauses (*b*), (*e*) & (*f*), it is stated that an approximate estimate amounting to Rs. 8·77 lakhs was approved by Government in January 1928 and subsequently the contract was given to Messrs. Braithwaite & Co. at a cost of Rs. 7 lakhs. May I know whether a proper estimate of the same was made and who prepared the estimate ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" Proper estimates were made by Government and the company have agreed to do it at a lesser cost."

Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—" May I know the meaning of 'approximate' estimate ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" The estimates may have to be revised after budget sanction. An approximate estimate of Rs. 8·77 lakhs was agreed to."

Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—" May I know whether tenders were called for and, if not, why not ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" That has been stated in the answer. In view of the urgency of the matter and in view of the lesser cost in the offer of the Braithwaite Company, it was not thought necessary to call for tenders."

Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—" May I know whether Government are aware of the fact that materials that are proposed to be used in this bridge are only rotten ones ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" It is contained in the answer that the matter is going to be examined."

Mr. K. R. KARANT :—" May I know whether this bridge is not a fishy matter ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" I do not know what the fishy matter is."

Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—" May I know whether Government have already entered into a formal agreement with the said company and, that the company is going on with the work ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" They have entered into a contract previously but if they find it unsatisfactory they may consider it again."

Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—" May I know whether the Government would take this Council into their confidence before they again enter into a formal agreement and get the matter examined by competent authorities ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" This is purely an administrative matter and I do not think the Legislative Council can do anything regarding the estimates. So far as Government are concerned, they are perfectly willing to consider the thing deeply, before they decide about the matter. A report has been called for from the Chief Engineer and the details are being enquired into."

Diwan Bahadur R. N. AROGYASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" May I know whether the matter will be placed before the House when it is done ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" The work has not yet begun."

Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—" May I request the Government whether they would think of stopping the work and make a full enquiry into the usefulness or the utility of the materials available before they enter into an agreement in regard to the scheme and whether they would not think of calling for contractors in the district ? "

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR :—" As I already said, the work has not yet begun."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" It being 12 o'clock, the House will pass on to the next item in the agenda."